

Two active members of Boston's gay community, Tom Reeves and Michael Thompson, were recently arrested, their house ransacked and their possessions seized by police. They were charged with "indecent assault and battery," specifically consensual fellatio, on a boy who was fourteen at the time of the allegation in 1979. The boy made the "complaint" after he had been arrested by police for probation violation and other offenses. Reeves and Thompson deny any sexual contact with the boy. No force was alleged by the boy and no pornography charges have been made. No child pornography of any sort was seized at the house. Yet media accounts, specifically the Boston GLOBE and radio stations WRKO-AM, WEEI and WITS, contained accusations of forced sex and child pornography. The exact address of these gay men was reported in conjunction with these sensational and unsubstantiated charges.

We believe these gay men have been slandered by the media, and perhaps by police officers, and that the cause of the slander is homophobia. We also fear that police and media hysteria and homophobia may provide in this case an excuse for an attack on the lesbian and gay community, and on gay youth and men who work with gay youth in particular. Nearly four years ago, the Suffolk County District Attorney's office and Boston area media created a witchhunt against gay men in the wake of similar charges in the misnamed "Revere" case. The lesbian and gay community responded at that time by demanding an end to the witchhunt, by drawing up media guidelines for such cases, and by helping to unseat the District Attorney. Now that two of our leaders have been singled out and abused in this way, our response will be even greater.

We demand a retraction of the false statements in the media about these two gay men. We demand the specific charge be dropped if it be shown that it is based upon a coerced statement by the gay youth. We demand that the gay youth involved be freed at once from incarceration and be allowed to tell his story freely to members of the gay community. We demand that these men, this youth and all other gay persons be accorded fair treatment, honest reporting and the full civil rights of persons who are innocent until proven guilty.



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